Charging and Remissions Policy

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1. Aims

Our Trust aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions,
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made.

2. Who is the Policy for?

This Policy is applicable to all students, parents or carers and is administered by each of the Trust's schools.

3. Definitions

None.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.

5. Where charges cannot be made

In each of the Trust's schools, charges cannot be made for the following:

5.1 Education

- Admission applications,
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment),
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of:
    - The national curriculum,
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school,
    - Religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent,
- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school,
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.

5.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport,
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated,
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school,
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

5.3 Residential Visits

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours,
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:
    - The national curriculum,
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school,
    - Religious education.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

6. Where charges can be made

In each of the Trust's schools, charges can be made for the following:

6.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them,
- Optional extras (see below),
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances,
- Certain early years provision,
- Community facilities.

6.2 Optional Extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, the school can charge for providing staff, materials, books, instruments or equipment. Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

6.3 Music Tuition

The school can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum,
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme,
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

6.4 Residential Visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

7. Voluntary Contributions

Parents/Carers may be invited to make voluntary contributions to cover the cost of activities which are deemed educationally desirable.

Requests for voluntary contributions will make it clear that:

a. There will be no obligation to contribute,
b. No child will be excluded from an activity or treated differently should a contribution not be made on their behalf,
c. No parent/carer will be asked to subsidise another child in any activity where contributions are requested,
d. The activity might not take place or may be cancelled if voluntary contributions are not made.

8. Remissions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items or activities set out in section 4 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the governing board and will depend on the activity in question.

9. Calculating Charges

Charges for activities will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of children participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising.
Parents/carers who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of eligible benefits, which are:

a. Income Support,
b. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance,
c. Income-related Employment and Support Allowance,
d. Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999,

e. The guaranteed element of Pension Credit,
f. Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190),
g. Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit,
h. Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents/carers. A proportion of costs incurred as a result of vandalism or other malicious actions by students, parents or carers whilst onsite will be recouped.

10. Debts

All debts are recovered in line with the Trust's debt recovery process.

11. Review

The Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO) monitors charges and remissions and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the CFOO annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Finance and Resources Committee and Board of Directors.

12. Links with other Policies

Links to other Policies include:

- Financial Management Policy.